



DETECTIVES CORNER

CURBING THEFT IN THE WORKPLACE

Theft in the workplace is on the rise. Estimates range in the area of 40 – 60 billion dollars a year, and growing at a rate of 15% annually. For the purpose of this discussion, the workplace includes offices, buildings, storage areas, vehicles and any off-site location where your company sends its employees to conduct business.

NO BUSINESS IS EXEMPT

There isn't a business in the land that does not experience some type of internal theft, so says the experts in the field. Talk to anyone who specializes in industrial security; they have the facts and figures. If you own or manage just about any type of business, you need to consider what workplace theft is costing you on an annual basis. As the economic situation gets tighter, business losses are bound to increase.

WHO IS DOING IT AND WHY?

The "Who" is the employer's job to figure out. The "Why" is more easily explained. Loss prevention experts agree that the percentage of employees who steal from their employer in the category of "Need" is going to increase dramatically in the coming weeks and months. Some breadwinners are finding themselves in situations they have never faced in the past, which is going to result in decisions to steal rather than starve. While there have been no increased reports of starving people on the streets, there are plenty of Americans who remember the days of the Great Depression and can relate to what is being said here.





WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT IT?

Preventing crime in the workplace is like preventing crime in general, it just isn't going to happen. There will always be someone who will try. The larger the number of employees, the more likely you will experience work place theft. We're not talking about someone breaking into your office or business, were talking strictly about internal theft. Limiting the opportunities is the key to getting the problem under control. Lessen the opportunities to steal and the number of thefts will be drastically reduced.

Talk about it during staff and office meetings. Many employers take the advice of their workers compensation providers and have regularly scheduled meetings where they discuss safety in the workplace. Some even have large signs in their buildings and in their parking lots which read. "?? DAYS WITHOUT A WORKPLACE ACCIDENT". Not a bad idea. It keeps the idea of on the job safety in the employee's minds and lets them know it is important to you. You also need to let them know that workplace thefts are important too. In many cases, it affects employee raises and bonuses and in these times, employee retention.

Depending on the size of your business or organization, consider forming a committee of management and employees who will meet on an established schedule to discuss workplace theft issues. In some cases, the Safety & Security Committee takes on this task. Once you establish the committee, don't fail to meet just because nothing has happened. Calendar these meetings just like any other and stick to it. Post the meeting notices for all to see. Let everyone know that workplace theft is a concern of yours and you're doing something about it.

WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS CAUGHT?

This is sometimes a tough management decision. Some would say, "Fire them". "Make an example for everyone to see". "Have them arrested". All of these things need to be considered. Establish a policy regarding the handling of these matters and stick to it. Just like children, adults need to know there are consequences for the decisions we make.

If you have any questions about this or any other crime prevention matter, feel free to contact me or any member of the Atlantis Police Department.

Sincerely,

Det. Marvin Jenne

DET. MARVIN JENNE, ID #400
ATLANTIS POLICE DEPARTMENT